DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 388 969 CS 215 097

AUTHOR McConnell, Jane S.
TITLE Teaching the Common Good: Journalism Textbooks' Embrace of Social Responsibility, 1891-1942.
PUB DATE Aug 95
NOTE 34p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (78th, Washington, DC, August 9-12, 1995).
PUB TYPE Historical Materials (060) -- Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS College Curriculum; Educational History; Ethics; Higher Education; *Journalism Education; *Journalism History; *News Writing; *Social Responsibility; *Textbook Content; Textbook Research
IDENTIFIERS *Curriculum Emphases; Hutchins Commission Report; Journalism Schools; *Professional Concerns; Professionalism

ABSTRACT

Because the Hutchins Commission's report, "A Free and Responsible Press," has served as a benchmark concerning social responsibility of the press, a study compared its ideas about press responsibility and the role of journalism with those in journalism textbooks. Twelve period textbooks were content analyzed in detail as were several books written by press members for general consumption. Results showed that textbooks published between 1891 and 1942 clearly reflected journalism's growing concern with society. But even as this concern shaped ideas of press responsibility and the role of journalism in society, textbooks continued to uphold the basic standards of news writing (9 of the 12 texts dealt with writing). The earliest textbooks reflected journalism's individualistic tradition by characterizing press responsibility as the commitment of journalists to their careers or their newspapers' success. By 1910, however, journalism educators turned their attention outward. Textbook authors promoted professionalism and increasingly recommended a college education for journalists to raise journalism's status. Textbooks of the 1920s revealed a growing interest in the role of journalism in society through simple libertarian descriptions of journalism's purpose in a democratic society. In 1923 the newly formed American Society of Newspaper Editors adopted canons which emphasized the journalist's support of freedom of speech and press. By the end of the decade, journalism was being likened to a public utility--both a private enterprise and a public service. By the 1940s, news writing textbooks were reflecting journalism educators' wholehearted embrace of social responsibility as a fundamental principle of journalism. (Includes 94 notes.) (TB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
✓ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
J McConnell
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

Teaching the Common Good: Journalism Textbooks' Embrace of Social Responsibility, 1891-1942

ED 388 969

The shift in American culture from individualism to collectivism that began in the nineteenth century and continued well into the twentieth quickly and fundamentally changed many aspects of journalism.[1] It led to a reinterpretation of the First Amendment, the formation of codes of ethics, the promotion of professionalism, the development of schools and departments of journalism, and the initiation of broadcast regulations.[2]

As the emphasis on individual freedom began giving way to collectivism, journalism became the target of social critics. A litany of critical literature lambasted journalism's sins, much of it directed at commercialism and the infusion of newspapers with sensationalism.[3]

Upgrading "the profession's honor" became a popular rationale for college curricula in the nation's pioneering journalism programs. When Joseph Pulitzer in 1904 explained his plans to endow a school of journalism at Columbia University, he wrote:

> My hope is that this college of journalism will raise the standard of the editorial profession. . . . I wish to begin a movement that will raise journalism to the rank of a learned profession, growing in the respect of the community as other professions far less important to the public interests have grown.[4]

CS 215 077

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The first departments and schools of journalism played key roles in shaping the standards, ideals and ethics of twentieth century journalism.[5] Their stress on liberal education, bolstered by specific studies, professional training and adherence to ethics and responsibility, also gave journalism professionals ballast to help counterbalance pressures caused by the culture's growing demand for social accountability of the press.[6]

When college journalism courses were first taught, there were virtually no journalism textbooks.[7] The development of journalism textbooks parallels changes in journalism and society during the first decades of this century. Their history is a unique chronicle of the perceptions of the proper role of journalism in society. It also documents changes in the way press responsibility was viewed by journalism educators and professionals.[8]

Because the Hutchins Commission's report, A Free and Responsible Press,[9] has served as a benchmark concerning social responsibility of the press, this study will compare its ideas about press responsibility and the role of journalism in society with those of the textbooks.

Histories of journalism education generally do not identify any textbook as the first to be used.[10] Frank Luther Mott suggested that Haney's Guide to Authorship in 1867 and Hints to Young Editors in 1872 were "two of the

earliest journalism manuals,"[11] but these were clearly not intended as college textbooks.[12] Haney's book was published two years before the first college journalism course was offered at Washington and Lee University in 1869.[13]

Nine of the twelve journalism textbooks examined in this study, all published from 1891 to 1942, dealt with the mechanics of news writing. They either were written by journalism educators or were the result of a collaboration of journalism educators with practitioners. The other three were written by practicing journalists and concentrated on journalism principles.

In the earliest textbooks, the authors' descriptions of press responsibility and the role of journalism in society were often tucked away in chapters with titles such as "The Definition of News" or "The Function of the Newspaper." In many cases, only a few lines or a paragraph or two were related to the topics.

Almost uniformly, the textbooks written by journalism educators offered less commentary than the books of professional journalists. Professionals were also more likely to use anecdotes and a casual writing style.

The earliest textbooks were highly technical, probably because many educators believed the role of journalism education was to produce proficient newspaper employees, well versed in the mechanics of news writing and ready for

the trials of journalism.[14] Few early textbooks offered anything but the most rudimentary explanations of the role of journalism in society or of press responsibility. Although professional journalists and educators of that time often waxed poetic about libertarian values, their textbooks revealed little more than practical advice for novice journalists.[15]

Many of the journalism books published at the end of the 19th century were pamphlet-sized (7 x 4.5"), and Writing For the Press: A Manual for Editors, Reporters, Correspondents, and Printers, published in 1891, was typical of this group.[16] Prefaced with poignant quotations relevant to journalistic writing,[17] the book focused on the mechanics of newspaper writing. There were pithy explanations of the personal responsibilities of journalists, although their usefulness was apparently in minimizing legal expenses and preserving their subjects' reputations:

> Make every effort to be accurate in every particular. False statements may end in libel suits. An enormous responsibility rests on every writer for the press. A single piece of carelessness, a single credited rumor may ruin some man's life. The newspaper makes and unmakes reputations. Honor and justice demand the greatest care in the exercise of what is unquestionably the most tremendous power of modern times.[18]

Steps into Journalism, written by Chicago Tribune literary editor Edwin Shuman and published in 1894, was an outgrowth of a course Shuman had taught at a Chautauquan

assembly in Michigan.[19] Organized much like modern news reporting textbooks, Shuman's book provided in-depth discussions of style, news gathering, reporter characteristics and organization.[20] This, however, was mixed with harsh criticism of newspapers. Shuman had witnessed the rise of independent journalism after the Civil War and viewed it as the selling out of true journalism and the advent of the business of selling newspapers:

> Before the era of large circulations and fast presses, the publisher of a newspaper often was inspired by a desire to inculcate some truth or to defend a certain set of political principles. To-day his paramount object is to make money . . .[21]

The publisher's obligation, Shuman concluded, was to the financial success of the business:

> With such enormous interests at stake, the paramount duty of the head of the enterprise is to keep it from financial collapse. He is only one of many whose money is invested in the paper, hence he has no right to wreck it for the sake of any idea, however dear to him. Some editors pay on lines conforming with their own ideas in most matters, but there is none who has not had to suppress many of his private views in trying to suit the public.[22]

A reporter's responsibilities, while broader than those of the publisher and editor, according to Shuman, are not to journalism or to society. Instead, they are to the development of personal characteristics that can enhance a journalist's career:

> There are certain fundamental qualities . . . that are absolutely necessary [to a reporter]. Without industry, patience, reliability, and persistency there can be no success in journalism.[23]

In the epilogue, Shuman suggests that journalism's problems are no less than those of society:

> A perfect press is not possible until we have a perfect nation, but both will advance in proportion as the press secures a high type of manhood in its publishers, editors, and reporters.[24]

Charles G. Ross' The Writing of News: A Handbook with Chapters on Newspaper Correspondence and Copy Reading, published in 1913, was one of the first news writing textbooks designed specifically for the classroom.[25] An associate professor of journalism at the University of Missouri when the book was published, Ross would leave the school in 1918 to become Washington correspondent for the St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

Born twenty years after Shuman and well into the era of individual journalism, Ross acknowledges the demise of the partisan press and its consequences to journalism:

> The age of personal journalism in its old sense has passed. In the new era the writer's personality counts for just as much, or more, but he must use it wholly as an instrument belonging to his newspaper and the public.[26]

The book implies that journalism must be based on adherence to accepted newspaper practices.[27] As a result, the reporter's responsibilities are both personal and related to the public:

> The writer who willfully injects his own likes and dislikes into the story breaks faith with his employer, whose space he is using, and with the public that buys the paper.[28]

The role of the newspaper in society, Ross wrote, is that of an "informer of the day's happenings" and an educator of the masses. "The daily press is the popular university," Ross wrote.[29] Without suggesting its possible significance to society, Ross explains the effect on news writing of educating the public:

> The newspaper is a business enterprise. . . . It can not [succeed] by shooting continually over the heads of its readers. But, while the newspaper reflects public taste, it is generally a little better than public taste. Certain classes of news are suppressed and others are carefully edited.[30]
>
> The moral obligation of the newspaper to its readers, as well as good taste, demands the pruning down of some classes of news.[31]

Not coincidentally, Ross' book provides an early view of social responsibility. While at the University of Missouri, Ross, with Walter Williams and Frank L. Martin, wrote "The Journalist's Creed."[32] The creed, first published in 1910 and reprinted frequently, was one of the first codes of ethics for journalists in this country.[33]

By 1911 and 1912, journalism practitioners as well as educators were increasingly involved in promoting professionalism as a means of changing the public's perception of journalism into that of a legitimate profession.[34] They frequently compared journalism to medicine and law as a public trust.[35] Educators and a growing number of professional journalists also promoted the

advantages of journalism education as a means of standardizing what they viewed as fundamental journalistic values and encouraging a basic liberal education.[36]

As the number of journalism programs grew, the need for journalism textbooks became increasingly great.[37] H.F. Harrington, an associate professor of journalism at the University of Illinois and T.T. Frankenberg, of the *Ohio State Journal*, wrote a book published in 1912 that was specifically for college coursework. Their book represents an emerging genre of journalism textbooks that emphasized professionalism. Although personal character building and training for newspaper employment were paramount in these books,[38] they also hinted at a community or social significance of press responsibility.

Harrington and Frankenberg's book, Essentials in Journalism: A Manual in Newspaper Making for College Classes, both endorsed and disparaged a college education for journalists. The authors claimed that a college graduate must "unlearn some of his college training before becoming a good journalist." But once that is done, they assured the reader, "the college trained reporter is better than the untrained reporter."[39]

To Harrington and Frankenberg, America's golden age of journalism was the decade before the Civil War, when "the allegiance of news gatherers never wavered, and when the

editor had a personal interest in every member of the staff."[40] The Civil War, they explained, made America a nation of newspaper readers and transformed newspapers from organs of editorial personality into news ventures. With this change came an unprecedented increase in subscriptions and demand for advertising space. The process, they argued, "robbed [newspapers] of much of its [sic] old-time vigor"[41] and turned them into great business enterprises:

> The commercial ideal is, too generally speaking, the guiding principle of the men who run present-day newspapers. Dividends often mark their goal. Both news and policy are made to cater to moneyed interests willing to give financial support. Instead of the dominating individuality of the regime of other-day intellectual giants, the modern newspaper substitutes business organization and an impersonal attitude shorn of responsibility. On the one hand, appeal is made to the public patronage; on the other, to the money market.[42]

The ideal newspaper, they proposed, would be similar to the *New York Times*, and would "record various shades of opinion and both sides of a question, fairly, temperately, and simply."[43]

Remaking journalism into a "great dynamo for generating the thought and opinion of the intelligent public," according to Harrington and Frankenberg, was the responsibility of the public as well as that of the journalist. Readers must demand accuracy and respectability, and journalists must be

> staunch in the conviction of their responsibility to the best interests of the community and imbued with the idea to see deeply and to write accurately.[44]

The authors shared the aspiration of many journalists and journalism educators of the first decade of the 20th century of imbuing journalism with professionalism. Redefining the character of the professional reporter was part of this process:[45]

> [College training] teaches that the character of the newspaper man is not the least important element in his equipment. It brief, it outlines a code of journalistic ethics that leaves out of consideration and questionable practices of the charlatan reporter and refuses to indorse [sic] the sensational methods of the "yellow" press. It aims to raise the standards of journalism and to make it the potent force for good that it should be in every community.[46]

> The call is loud for men of conscience, heart, and brain. The American newspaper needs new blood to meet the exactions of a progressive civilization. . . . The future is big with opportunity.[47]

Responsibility, according to this textbook, generally lay in the journalist's obligation to develop moral character, protect the employer's good name and avoid discrediting the subjects of news stories.

Another textbook that focused on professionalism was Training for the Newspaper Trade. Published in 1916, it was written by Don C. Seitz, the business manager of the *New York World*. Largely anecdotal, this book was intended not as a news writing textbook, but as a demystifier of newspaper operations. It includes colorful and practical

descriptions of the newsroom and the mechanics of newspaper operation. It also presents the practitioner's perspective.

Critical of the early partisan press and the "period of personality: Greeley, Raymond, Webb and Weed, Halstead, Medill and Watterson," Seitz explained that instead of serving political parties or a powerful editor, modern newspapers represent "forces of opinion":

> It is no longer the opinion of the editor that prevails. It is the opinion of the paper, which has taken on the personality lost by the editor.[48]

> The decent newspaper . . . does sift its news, which is quite another matter from either suppression or repression. It does not pander and it tries to adjust news values to fit the comprehension of its constituency, not to place a limit upon what it should know. . . . [The newspaper is] a plain recorder of events, good or evil, not the creator or adjuster of them![49]

Reacting defensively to accusations that newspapers had become business enterprises, Seitz characterized newspapers in thinly veiled libertarian tones:

> Few newspapers ever began as calculating getters of money and few could survive if this was their sole intent. That money comes is the result, not the primary purpose, of good newspaper making.[50]

Lacking the clear connection between journalism and society that later textbooks asserted, Seitz's book provided an almost negligible explanation of newspapers' impact on society:

> . . . where the paper speaks, the force it represents is crystallized, the people and the politicians know that a vast activity is in the field to demand and enforce.[51]

Many journalism textbooks of this period were expanding on the basic formula for news writing textbooks and including historical context or advocating professionalism. But a textbook written by the director of the School of Journalism at the University of Washington, M. Lyle Spencer, and published in 1917, resembled in content some of the earlier journalism textbooks.

News Writing: The Gathering, Handling and Writing of News Stories focused almost exclusively on the fundamentals of news writing, with a large section of exercises and a stylebook at the end of the book. It offered little commentary about the social role of journalism or press responsibility. Briefly, however, Spencer explained that reporters should be honorable:

> To-day a newspaper expects every man on its staff to be a gentleman. It wants no lawbreakers or sneaks. Stories must be obtained honestly and written up honestly.[52]

Spencer viewed responsibility as the duty of reporter to serve the newspaper:

> A newspaper man has no right willfully to keep back information or to distort news. Unbiased stories, or stories as nearly unbiased as possible, are what newspapers want.[53]

While Spencer's book gave little space to journalism ethics or history, it is incorrect to assume he did not value them. Even the earliest schools and departments of

journalism offered courses dealing specifically about these matters.[54] Many professors and journalists even insisted that teaching ethics should be intrinsic to all journalism courses.[55] But most news writing courses were designed to cover the mechanics of journalistic writing, and professors favored textbooks that focused narrowly on their course content.[56]

In 1923 the second edition of Willard Grosvenor Bleyer's Newspaper Writing and Editing was published.[57] The textbook emphasized news writing mechanics, offering suggestions for further study at the end of each chapter, a stylebook at the end of the book and copious examples of news stories. Although the first edition was published in 1913 and much of the book was unchanged, there are some notable revisions.

In some ways, the preface Bleyer added in 1923 provides the most conspicuous evidence of changes in the public's perception of journalism. In it Bleyer described some of the modifications he had made in the new edition:

> The function of the newspaper has been discussed at considerable length, in order to call the student's attention to the importance of the newspaper as an influence in democratic government, and to point out the significance of the work of the newspaper writer and editor in relation to society.[58]

Bleyer does not elaborate on these ideas. Instead he says that to recognize such a function of the newspaper "is

to give the newspaper a place of great responsibility in a democracy like ours" -- but that considering

> only its news-distributing function and disregard editorial influence, the place of the newspaper is still a vital one, for the success of a democratic form of government depends upon intelligent action by the individual voter.[59]

The idea of journalistic responsibility has moved away from the strictly personal, practical obligations of earlier textbooks, but Bleyer's description of this responsibility is merely a discussion of the importance of accurate news reporting.[60]

Bleyer's preface also suggests that the role of the journalist in society is important. But the final section of the book, "The Journalist's Responsibility," simply describes journalism's attempts to promote its professionalism:

> Only within the last twenty years have schools and departments of journalism been provided to give young men and women systematic professional preparation for newspaper work. The recent organization of a national society of editors of large daily papers, the adoption of codes of ethics by several state press associations, and the rapid growth of instruction in journalism in colleges and universities throughout the country, all indicate that journalism is assuming a more definite professional status.[61]

Bleyer apparently used contemporary terms to describe what he believed were traditional journalistic values.

In 1922 Casper Yost, editorial page editor of the St. Louis Globe-Democrat, and four other editors met to form a

national organization that would "develop a stronger professional spirit and raise the professional and ethical standards for journalism."[62] A year later, the newly formed American Society of Newspaper Editors (ASNE) adopted the Canons of Journalism, which emphasized the journalist's support of freedom of speech and press and bound members to work for accuracy, truth, decency, and fairness.[63]

Journalism textbooks published after acceptance of the ASNE code invariably included two new elements: a chapter or sections concerning ethics and references to journalism's importance to freedom. But they also continued to revere the earlier standards of professionalism and personal responsibility.

A journalism textbook written by Yost, the president of ASNE, was published in 1924. Like other textbooks of the time written by nonacademicians, The Principles of Journalism stressed not the mechanics of news writing but a general examination of the newspaper business. Throughout the book, journalists' responsibilities were emphasized.

Yost clearly believed that journalism had undergone a transformation. Gone, he wrote, were the days of "yellow" journalism and the embarrassment of admitting that one was a journalist:

> Journalism has taken its place among the great professions. Its influence is universally recognized. It has become a necessity of modern life and modern progress.[64]

He wrote about journalism almost reverently and admonished journalists to remember that the purpose of journalism is to serve the public:

> there is a real and remarkable power of the press, and it is a power that inspires me always with a very solemn sense of responsibility.[65]

Responsibility to the public should be the foremost consideration of editors and reporters, Yost wrote. It is, in fact, necessary because

> it is only as the newspaper serves the public that it can serve itself, and it cannot render the best service either to the public or to itself unless it recognizes this fact and keeps it in mind.[66]

The role of journalism in society, he said, is

> essential to the security and progress of democratic institutions, essential to the preservation of all the other liberties that constitute the most prized possessions of humanity.[67]

More than two decades later, Yost's words were echoed in the final report of the Commission on Freedom of the Press:

> Freedom of the press is essential to political liberty. . . . Free expression is therefore unique among liberties: it promotes and protects all the rest.[68]

For Yost, the responsibility of journalists was twofold:

> First, to guard [freedom of the press] from any encroachment upon it that is not justified by an immediate, urgent and obvious peril to the free government and the civil liberties that it is its province to protect; and, second, to exercise that right wisely and sincerely for the public welfare.[69]

But a newspaper had an obligation as a business enterprise, too. In contrast with the commission's report, Yost saw no inherent conflict between these interests:

> [The editor or editorial directors] have . . . two interests to serve, that of the paper and that of the public. There is no necessary conflict in this, for as a rule the best service to the paper is that which gives the best service to the public.[70]

To succeed, Yost explained, a newspaper must attain a measure of public approval. The newspaper must respect the public's opinions, emotions, prejudices and passions, Yost wrote, to maintain its approval and support -- even though it may be necessary occasionally to go contrary to the public's desires.[71]

The Hutchins Commission did not accept this explanation -- what its members called the theory of public service.[72] Instead, they felt that a newspaper should concern itself with elevating the public -- what they called "building and transforming the interests of the public."[73]

Technical Writing of Farm and Home reflects an offshoot in journalism education that occurred primarily at land-grant colleges in the Midwest. F.W. Beckman, Harry R. O'Brien, and Blair Converse, all associated at various times with the Technical Journalism Department at Iowa State College (now Iowa State University), wrote a textbook for classroom use in colleges "which teach agricultural and other technical phases of journalism."[74]

Published in 1927, but in some ways typical of the textbooks of the earlier decades that focused on the mechanics of news writing, this book combined anecdotes and classroom assignments with a heavy dose of agriculture-related information.

Although the book included a chapter called "Ethical and Legal Aspects of Technical Writing," it echoed the practical, personal ethical concerns of previous textbooks.[75] In a reference to the role of journalism in society, however, the authors slide across the libertarian perspective into a vague prescription for competent news writing:

> The journalistic function is enhanced and intensified in a democracy because of the fundamental conception of democracy that all who have the suffrage must pass judgments on public affairs and public men. If a man is to exercise his right of suffrage intelligently, he must have the data for the forming of intelligent judgments. These the journals attempt -- and must attempt if they are to be "live" and "acting" -- to give him. That they do it imperfectly or that the reader is unable always to assimilate the data presented does not invalidate the essential importance of the function: It merely points the direction which more competent journalism must take.[76]

The fundamental service of journalism, they explain, is to alleviate people's fear of being isolated:

> Journalism is then an organized attempt to do efficiently and economically what men have more or less always done -- satisfy the instinct of curiosity and thereby ameliorate the fear of isolation.[77]

In this passage, either the authors exhibited extreme cynicism or they simply underscored one of the elemental features of life in rural America.

By this time, the concept of journalism as a public utility had not appeared in journalism textbooks -- although authors were moving away from professionalism and journalists' personal responsibilities to view journalism as a social asset. The significance of characterizing journalism as a public utility was that it explained how newspapers could be private businesses and serve the public. It implied that a contract existed between journalism and its public.

In 1929 a textbook written by University of Wisconsin journalism professor Chilton Rowlette Bush offered the first public-franchise definition of journalism's social contract. Bush wrote Newspaper Reporting for Public Affairs as a news writing textbook that particularly emphasized government and political coverage.

Although Bush addressed journalism ethics indirectly, the social nature of press responsibility was clearly important in his view:

> The chief functions of the newspaper are to provide information that is "food for opinion" and to stand vigil for the public to guard it against unscrupulous exploiters, demagogues, and other real public enemies. The reporter, therefore, is responsible to both the newspaper and the public.[78]

But the journalist's personal responsibility was also significant:

> It is because the newspaper, more than any other private business, and the newspaper man, more than any other professional man, is a champion of civic righteousness that the profession attracts a caliber of personnel whose sense of honor, honesty, and fair play is exceeded by no other profession.[79]

Bush recognized that changes had occurred since the partisan press days of the late nineteenth century. In describing this change, he came close to describing the role of the press as a public utility:

> For newspapers, despite their beginning as partisan organs, have come to believe they have a covenant with their readers to provide them with impartial facts. The newspaper's covenant to publish facts does not necessarily imply, however, that the newspaper abandon its leadership in politics.[80]

Finally Bush combines, tentatively, the idea of journalism as a public utility with the idea of social responsibility:

> Is it asking too much of a private business to demand that it perform on a higher ethical plane than ordinary businesses? Ideally, the newspaper is a quasi-public institution, and that fact ought to determine its decision.[81]

Within a decade, the notion of journalism as a public utility would be thoroughly adopted by journalism textbook writers.

In 1941 the third edition of Grant Milnor Hyde's news-writing textbook, Newspaper Handbook, was published. Hyde, who was director of the University of Wisconsin School of Journalism from 1927 to 1948,[82] included in the third

edition a 1941 foreword as well as the preface and introduction from the editions from 1921 and 1926. From these it is possible to trace many of Hyde's revisions.

In the 1926 edition was a chapter called "Applied Ethics," which Hyde said was written "during the wave of 'codes of ethics' among newspapermen." In it Hyde explained that the significance of the codes

> is that high-minded newspaper men feel strongly the public responsibility of their calling and desire to set forth their convictions of the necessary standards of individual conduct -- for their own guidance and for the guidance of those who are entering the newspaper profession.[83]

The primary reason for the codes, according to Hyde, was to standardize the responsibilities of journalists. The journalist has duties "to himself, to his newspaper, to the public, to the nation, and to the profession of journalism."[84] But the responsibility to the public was fundamental:

> To a certain extent, a newspaper operates under a public franchise. The guaranty of the freedom of the press which was written into the federal constitution . . . constitutes virtually a franchise granting certain rights, liberties, and privileges to the newspapers. In return for these privileges, the press of America is bound to recognize certain duties and responsibilities toward the public. . . . Every high-minded editor knows that no newspaper which accepts these privileges without in turn playing fair with the responsibilities involved in the bargain can survive for any extended period.[85]

The principal functions of a newspaper, Hyde explained, are:

> (1) to print the news; (2) to interpret and comment on current events; (3) to serve as an advertising medium; (4) to furnish useful information and practical advice;

> (5) to supply entertainment; (6) to aid in the proper education of the public; (7) to guide public taste in language, sports, amusements, and general outlook on life; and (8) to aid the development of the community.[86]

Hyde explained that the influence of the newspaper had recently greatly increased, along with the number of basic functions of a newspaper:

> Formerly when the newspaper was read only by a few intelligent men, they looked to it merely for an editor's opinion and had a basis for evaluating the opinion. Now, circulating among the masses, the newspaper is supplying the *facts* upon which citizens *base* their opinions of governmental policies, officials, and acts.[87]

It is the public duty of the journalist, Hyde explained, to write so that readers will get correct impressions of democracy. With this explanation, Hyde's vision of social responsibility transcended even that of the Hutchins Commission.

In 1942, a year before the commission was formed, a textbook written by Stanley Johnson and Julian Harriss was published. The Complete Reporter was intended for use as a general news writing textbook and focused on the mechanics of journalism.[88]

Unlike many previous textbooks, however, it frequently addresses press responsibility and the role of journalism in society -- nearly always in reference to a journalist's societal obligations. Johnson and Harriss use the public-

utility analogy almost immediately to explain the business of journalism:

> At the same time it is more than a business enterprise. It is so involved with, and so directly affects, the general public that it is essentially a public utility, though it is not classified and regulated as such. It is definitely engaged in public service. Its object, like that of the publicly owned utility, is not merely profit but public welfare.[89]

This results in some moral difficulties, however:

> On the one hand is that public interest, and on the other are special private interests. Where these are clearly conceived, the newspaper's policy . . . will influence its decisions and establish its course of action.[90]

But there are times, Johnson and Harriss explain, when the public must lead the newspapers and journalists:

> Certain larger issues of ethics and policy must await the crystallization of public opinion. . . . these larger ethical questions must be determined ultimately by public opinion. They cannot and need not be determined by the reporter. It is his own professional code of ethics that concerns him most.[91]

Johnson and Harriss describe personal responsibility as a moral frame of reference apart from the expectations and policies of a newspaper. When a reporter runs into problems with a publisher or owner, they write, the reporter's choice of action may be extremely difficult:

> He can refuse to alter his own principles, and resign. He can subscribe to the new policies and salvage his self-respect as best he can. Or he can attempt to work out with the employer an agreement for his own integrity and independence.[92]

A few years earlier, journalism textbook writers were adamant that reporters must serve the newspaper.

Even the mantra of journalism professors about competent news writing implied social responsibility:

> Altogether, the newspaper and the reporter confront an opportunity to serve the community by placing emphasis on fullness, accuracy, and honesty in reporting.[93]

Conclusion

News writing textbooks published between 1891 and 1942 clearly reflected journalism's growing concern with society. But even as this concern shaped ideas of press responsibility and the role of journalism in society, the book's authors continued to uphold the basic standards of news writing.

The earliest textbooks reflected journalism's individualistic tradition by characterizing press responsibility as the commitment of journalists to their careers or their newspapers' success. By the 1910s, however, journalism educators had begun to turn their attention outward. Textbook authors promoted professionalism and increasingly recommended college education for journalists in an attempt to raise journalism's status. By the middle of the decade, some were paying attention to the possible effects of public opinion on the media.

Textbooks of the 1920s revealed a growing interest in the role of journalism in society through simple libertarian descriptions of journalism's purpose in a democratic society. By the end of the decade, journalism was being likened to a public utility -- both a private enterprise and a public service.

The perception of press responsibility changed rapidly in the decade. Textbooks first explained it as a personal practical obligation, then as a responsibility to the employer and the public, and then as a responsibility to the employer, nation, public and journalism profession. By the end of the decade, press responsibility to the public was considered fundamental.

By the early 1940s, news writing textbooks were reflecting journalism educators' wholehearted embrace of social responsibility as a fundamental principle of journalism.

In the foreword of A Free and Responsible Press, commission chairman Robert M. Hutchins acknowledges that the commission's recommendations are not startling. In fact, he wrote, "The most surprising thing about them is that nothing more surprising could be proposed."[94] In light of the first fifty years of journalism textbooks and American culture movement toward collectivism, one can only agree.

NOTES

[1] The shift in journalism has been described by several scholars. For example, it was described as an effect of a turning inward by Americans after the close of the western frontier by Frank Luther Mott, as a loss of faith in liberalism by William Rivers, Theodore Peterson and Jay Jensen, as a result of technological changes and press criticism by Fred Siebert, Theodore Peterson and Wilbur Schramm, as the result of litigation involving newspapers during the 1930s by Margaret Blanchard and as a result of press criticism by Marion Marzolf. See Frank Luther Mott, American Journalism: A History, 1690-1960, 3d ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1962); William Rivers, Theodore Peterson and Jay Jensen, The Mass Media and Modern Society (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971), 82; Fred S. Siebert, Theodore Peterson and Wilbur Schramm, Four Theories of the Press (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1963), 77-80; Margaret Blanchard, "The Hutchins Commission, The Press and the Responsibility Concept," Journalism Monographs No. 49 (Minneapolis: Association for Education in Journalism, May, 1977); and Marion Tuttle Marzolf, Civilizing Voices: American Press Criticism, 1880-1950 (New York and London: Longman, 1991).

There are additional books that deal with the changes in American culture that occurred at the beginning of the century. Many of them examine specific intellectual or cultural impulses, including isolationism, nationalism, anti-intellectualism, progressivism, radicalism and collectivism. Other volumes help to explain various phenomena that occurred as a result of changes in the social milieu of the time.

The shift is best illustrated by the editorial style of the 1880s and 1890s press (William R. Hearst's note to Cuba, for example) on one end and the report of the Commission on Freedom of the Press, A Free and Responsible Press on the other.

[2] Jane S. McConnell, "The Emergence of 'Social Responsibility': The Movement to Make the Media Safe for Democracy" (Ph.D. diss., University of Iowa, forthcoming).

[3] Silas Bent, Randolph Bourne, Lincoln Steffens, Walter Lippmann, Upton Sinclair, Will Irwin and H.L. Mencken were just a few of most outspoken protagonists.

[4] Robert W. Jones, Journalism in the United States (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1947), 513-4.

[5] The school of journalism, at the University of Missouri, first offered courses in 1908.

[6] Marion T. Marzolf, Civilizing Voices: American Press Criticism, 1880-1950 (New York and London: Longman, 1991), 59.

[7] Journalism courses were offered sporadically in the late 1800s and early 1900s.

[8] Journalism educators of the time were invariably former journalists. Typical were the founders of the University of Missouri School of Journalism, E.W. Stephens, publisher of the Columbia *Herald* and Walter Williams, editor of the Columbia *Herald*. Both had held positions on the University Board of Curators. Williams became the school's first head and director.

[9] Commission on Freedom of the Press, A Free and Responsible Press, with a foreword by Robert Hutchins (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1947).

[10] Joe Mirando, "Journalism's First Textbook: Creating a News Reporting Body of Knowledge," paper presented at the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication 76th convention, 14 August 1993, 2-3.

[11] Mott, American Journalism, 311-312, 405-*406*, 489, 604-605, 727-728, 797-798, 864-865. Jesse Haney, Haney's Guide to Authorship (New York: Haney, 1867) and Hints to Young Editors by an Editor (the author was probably Charles Chatfield)(New Haven, Conn.: Charles C. Chatfield, 1872).

[12] Hints to Young Editors even argues against the development of specific journalism courses.

[13] Mirando, "Journalism's First Textbook," 4. This course, which was set up by Robert E. Lee at what was then known as Washington College, was identified by journalism historians James M. Lee, Albert A. Sutton, Paul Dressel, and William D. Sloan as the first journalism course in this country. Earlier proposals for journalism schools date to at least 1834 when The Washington Institute was planned. Interest in journalism education dates back to at least 1799 when John W. Fenno suggested that journalists should be required to have college training. See Gazette of the United States (Philadelphia), 4 March 1799.

[14] Press associations played a significant role in the establishment of many departments of journalism.

[15] For excellent examples of the religious and poetic influence of journalism on educators and professionals, see Sara Lockwood Williams' Twenty Years of Education for Journalism (Columbia, Missouri: The E.W. Stephens Publishing Company, 1929), 337-403.

[16] Robert Luce, Writing For the Press: A Manual for Editors, Reporters, Correspondents, and Printers, (Boston: The Writer Publishing Company, 1891).

[17] Such as "One of the greatest of all faults in speaking and writing is this: the using of many words to say little." -- Coleridge. Other early news writing books were: George Gaskell, How to Write for the Press, 1884; Thomas Campbell-Copeland, The Ladder of Journalism, 1889; Alexander Nevins, The Blue Pencil and How to Avoid It, 1890.

[18] Luce, Writing For the Press, 84.

[19] Edwin Shuman, Steps into Journalism (Evanston, Ill.: Correspondence School of Journalism, 1894): viii. Steps into Journalism was reissued in 1899 as The Art and Practice of Journalism and then revised and renamed Practical Journalism for publication in 1903. It was reprinted in 1912 and again in 1920.

[20] Mirando, "Journalism's First Textbook," 15.

[21] Edwin Shuman, Practical Journalism: A Complete Manual of the Best Newspaper Methods (New York and London: D. Appleton and Co., 1912) 16-17.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Ibid., 17.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Charles G. Ross, The Writing of News: A Handbook with Chapters on Newspaper Correspondence and Copy Reading (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1913). In the preface Ross wrote, "It is hoped the book will prove helpful either as a laboratory guide in the school room or as a text book for home use."

The general policy of the School of Journalism at the University of Missouri when Ross taught there was to not use textbooks. Faculty members wrote for use by their students "Deskbook of the School of Journalism," a basic style manual. Textbooks written by faculty members were used as reference material. See Williams, Twenty Years of Education for Journalism, 66.

[26] Ross, The Writing of News, 21.

[27] Mirando, "Journalism's First Textbook," 17.

[28] Ross, The Writing of News, 18.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Ibid., 46.

[31] Ibid., 23.

[32] Walter Williams was then dean of the School of Journalism at the University of Missouri. Martin, a professor at the school, would become Williams' successor.

[33] Jones, Journalism in the United States, 525-7.

[34] Much of the struggle for professionalism was an attempt to dismantle the image of journalists as unorthodox and of sensational journalism. See Williams, Twenty Years of Education for Journalism, 55.

[35] Much of the material about journalism education during the first three decades included this comparison. Clifford G. Christians and Catherine L. Covert, Teaching Ethics in Journalism Education (Hastings-on-Hudson, New York: The Hastings Center, 1980) 2-3.

[36] Ibid. Journalism educators were often regarded by their academic colleagues with some scorn. Promoting professionalism helped educators as well as the profession. For examples of how early journalism educators were perceived, see Grant M. Hyde, "Taking Stock After 24 Years," The Journalism Quarterly, 6(1929): 11; Williams, Twenty Years of Education for Journalism, 56, 371; Frank L. Martin "School vs. Courses," The Journalism Quarterly, 6(1929):13; and Harry B. Center "Cooperation With the Profession," The Journalism Quarterly, 6(1929):16.

[37] Many of the early journalism schools and departments did not use textbooks. Associations affiliated with journalism education, however, would request that professors write textbooks. For an explanation of the decision made by Rutgers University to avoid textbooks, see Allen Sinclair Will's Education for Newspaper Life: An Account of the Cooperation of a University and the Press (Newark: The Essex Press, 1931), 128-9.

[38] Will, Education for Newspaper Life, 71. At Rutgers University the journalism department viewed character building and news writing training as paramount. Their primary goal was to create good newspaper employees.

[39] H.F. Harrington and T.T. Frankenberg, Essentials in Journalism: A Manual in Newspaper Making for College Classes (Boston, NY, Chicago: Ginn and Co.,) 1912, xi.

[40] Ibid., 201.

[41] Ibid., 204.

[42] Ibid.

[43] Ibid., 206.

[44] Ibid., 209.

[45] The Practice of Journalism, by Walter Williams and Frank L. Martin (Columbia, Mo.: Stephens, 1911) emphasizes the qualities and behavior of journalists, devoting a long chapter to the discussion of reporters' characters.

[46] Harrington and Frankenberg, Essentials in Journalism, ix.

[47] Ibid., 209.

[48] Don C. Seitz, Training for the Newspaper Trade (Philadelphia and London: J.B. Lippincott Co., 1916), 52.

[49] Ibid., 86.

[50] Ibid., 51.

[51] Ibid., 53.

[52] M. Lyle Spencer, News Writing: The Gathering, Handling and Writing of News Stories (Boston, New York, Chicago: D.C. Heath & Co., 1917), 56.

[53] Ibid., 67.

[54] Often journalism ethics was taught under another name. It appeared in early journalism curricula as: Problems in Journalism, Editorial Problems and Policies, Ethics, Special Problems in Journalism, Newspaper Problems, Principles of Journalism, Problems in Newspaper Policy, Newspaper Direction, Ethics of Journalism. See L.N. Flint's "Comparing Notes on Journalism Courses," Journalism Bulletin 1(Sept. 1925): 84-85.

[55] Joseph Pulitzer urged the training of journalists in ethical principles. "Training in ethical principles must pervade all the courses, and be the motive of the whole institution, never forgotten, even in its most practical work." See J.W. Cunliffe, "The Relations Between Cultural and Technical Courses in Journalism," Journalism Bulletin 3(March 1926): 17.

[56] This is the preference of universities for mechanical communication James W. Carey described in "A Plea for the University Tradition: AEJ Presidential Address," Journalism Quarterly, 55(Winter 1978): 846-855. According to Carey, universities have favored "those subjects that can be transmitted in mass ways and those textbooks that suppress discourse as they pretend to be serving it." Included are "the subjects of ethics and values."

[57] Willard Grosvenor Bleyer, Newspaper Writing and Editing, 2nd ed. (Boston, New York, Chicago, San Francisco: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1923). In 1923 Bleyer was director of the journalism program at the University of Wisconsin.

[58] Ibid., v-vii.

[59] Ibid., 380.

[60] Ibid., 381.

[61] Ibid., 398.

[62] "Problems of Journalism: ASNE Proceedings" (1923): 1-2.

[63] Marion T. Marzolf, Civilizing Voices: American Press Criticism, 1880-1950 (New York and London: Longman, 1991), 92.

[64] Casper S. Yost, The Principles of Journalism (New York and London: D. Appleton and Co., 1924), v.

[65] Ibid., 110.

[66] Ibid.

[67] Ibid., 115.

[68] Commission on Freedom of the Press, A Free and Responsible Press, with a foreword by Robert Hutchins (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1947), 6.

[69] Yost, The Principles of Journalism, 122.

[70] Ibid., 123.

[71] Ibid., 131.

[72] Commission on Freedom of the Press, A Free and Responsible Press, 91.

[73] Ibid., 92.

[74] F.W. Beckman, Harry R. O'Brien, and Blair Converse, Technical Writing of Farm and Home (Ames, Iowa: Journalism Publishing Company, 1927), x.

[75] It focuses on such things as crediting sources, selling rewritten stories, respecting confidences, fictionalizing and plagiarism. See Beckman, O'Brien and Converse, Technical Writing, 327-330.

[76] Ibid., 20.

[77] Ibid.

[78] Chilton R. Bush, Newspaper Reporting of Public Affairs: An Advanced Course in Newspaper Reporting and a Manual for Professional Newspaper Men (New York, London: D. Appleton and Co., 1929), 3.

[79] Ibid., 54.

[80] Ibid., 327.

[81] Ibid., 351.

[82] Frank Durham, "Cultural History of a Curriculum: The Search for Salience," Journalism Educator 46(Winter 1992): 16.

[83] Ibid., 268.

[84] Ibid., 270.

[85] Ibid., 269.

[86] Ibid., 270.

[87] Ibid., 282. Emphasis in original.

[88] Stanley Johnson and Julian Harriss, The Complete Reporter: A General Text in News Writing and Editing, Complete with Exercises (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1942), v.

[89] Ibid., 9.

[90] Ibid., 138.

[91] Ibid., 138.

[92] Ibid., 139.

[93] Ibid., 155.

[94] Commission on Freedom of the Press, A Free and Responsible Press, viii.